

Remarks

In view of the following discussion, the applicants submit that none of the claims now pending in the application are anticipated under the provisions of 35 U. S. C. § 102. Thus, the applicants believe that all of these claims are in allowable form.

REJECTIONS

A. 35 U. S. C. § 102

1. Claims 1, 7 and 15 are not anticipated by Toda

Claims 1, 7 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U. S. C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Toda (U. S. Patent 6,377,522 issued April 23, 2002). Toda has a 102(e) date of December 17, 1999, which is the filing date of the U. S. application. Applicants' application claims foreign priority to an application filed in Germany on July 27, 1999, which is prior to the 102(e) date for Toda. Applicants have submitted with this paper an English copy of the equivalent published European patent application EP 1 073 044 A2 claiming priority to German priority application DE199 34 473 filed on July 27, 1999. In view of the above, the basis for the Examiner's rejection of claims 1, 7 and 15 pursuant to 35 U. S. C. § 102(e) has been removed. As such, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

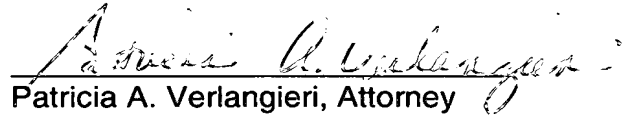
CONCLUSION

Thus, the applicants submit that none of the claims presently in the application are anticipated under the provisions of 35 U. S. C. § 102. Consequently, the applicants believe that all of the claims are presently in

condition for allowance. Accordingly, both reconsideration of this application and its swift passage to issue are earnestly solicited.

If, however, the Examiner believes that there are any unresolved issues requiring adverse final action in any of the claims now pending in the application, it is requested that the Examiner telephone Ms. Patricia A. Verlangieri, at (609) 734-6867, so that appropriate arrangements can be made for resolving such issues as expeditiously as possible.

Respectfully submitted,



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